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Legislation brings fairness to mental health board representation

Lansing – A bill designed to create greater equity between counties who have created large multi-county community mental health boards is being sent to the governor for approval today.

Senate Bill 667, introduced by Sen. Jason Allen (R-Traverse City), addresses the unique situation of these larger, multi-county boards that has arisen since the creation of the statute.

“When Great Lakes Community Mental Health and North Central Community Mental Health merged into Northern Lakes Community Mental Health we were faced with a unique situation,” Allen said. “Where Grand Traverse County was able to have six representatives on the board, while other counties were put at a disadvantage and were allowed one only.

“This legislation will represent the counties more fairly, while still considering population as a major factor in the number of board designees.”

Allen’s legislation would allow boards consisting of five or more counties to expand the size of the board to ensure that each county is allowed at least two members.

“This balance will help protect the interests of the smaller counties, while maintaining an appropriate level of representation based on population,” Allen said.

The bill passed Senate and House unanimously.

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